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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4019

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RHMFIS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEHAK/USDAO ANKARA TU PRIORITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC//USDP:PDUSDP/ISA:EUR/ISA:NESA// PRIORITY

RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU PRIORITY

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY

RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK PRIORITY

RHMFIS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

RHMFIS/425ABS IZMIR TU//CC// PRIORITY

RHMFIS/39ABG INCIRLIK AB TU PRIORITY

RUEPGAB/MNF-I C2X BAGHDAD IZ PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 002538

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [TU](#) [US](#) [AM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: FALL-OUT FROM HFAC PASSAGE OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE
RESOLUTION CONFLATED WITH PKK DEBATE

REF: A. ANKARA 2524

[1](#)B. ANKARA 2522

[1](#)C. ANKARA 2517 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: DCM Nancy McEldowney for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Turkish government and public reaction to the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC) October 10 approval of the Armenian genocide resolution (AGR) was fueled by harsh statements from opposition political party leaders and some media commentators, as well as strong remarks by the Prime Minister. Meanwhile, a legislative motion requesting parliamentary authorization for a cross-border operation into Iraq to counter the PKK threat will be introduced into parliament October 16. The two issues have become conflated in the minds of many Turks, who see AGR as another slap in the face and blame the U.S. for not taking action against PKK safe havens in Iraq. Meanwhile, there were reports of cross border shelling over the weekend, but in the vicinity of Habur Gate activities remain normal with no signs of a military buildup or preparations for an imminent cross-border operation (CBO). END SUMMARY

Reaction to AGR Becomes More Vitriolic...

[1](#)2. (SBU) Response to the HFAC's approval of an AGR (refs A-C) became more negative over the weekend as opposition politicians and some media commentators began to call for retaliatory measures against U.S. interests in Turkey. Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Deniz Baykal said Turkey should shut down the U.S. air base at Incirlik, at least temporarily, in reaction to the HFAC vote. He said that failing to take retaliatory action would weaken the position of those defending Turkish interests in the U.S. and humiliate Turkey. Pointing to reported statements made by several Members of Congress during the October 10 vote that Turkish reaction would die down within a few days and that retaliatory threats were just a bluff, some columnists called for GOT officials to prove them wrong.

¶3. (C) Senior government officials and politicians battled to position themselves at the forefront of public anger against the U.S. Nationalist Action Party (MHP) Chairman Devlet Bahçeli accused those - including PM Erdogan - who claim that a cross-border operation into Iraq against PKK terrorists would not be effective as being "in collusion" with the terrorist group. Erdogan has sought to strengthen his hand by lashing out against U.S. warnings about a CBO. On October 12, Erdogan said he is prepared for a rupture in relations with the U.S. if his government launches an incursion into northern Iraq, telling reporters, "If such an option is chosen, whatever its price, it will be paid." Erdogan added, "Did they (the U.S.) seek permission from anyone when they came from a distance of 10,000 kilometers and hit Iraq? We do not need anyone else's advice."

¶4. (SBU) In an October 14 interview, Chief of Defense Staff GEN Yasar Buyukanit warned that ties with the U.S. will be irrevocably damaged if the full House of Representatives passes H.R. 106: "I can say this: If this measure, which has been passed by the Committee, is then passed by the House of Representatives, our military relationship with the U.S. will never be the same again. We cannot explain this to the Turkish people...In this regard, the U.S. shot its own foot."

GOT Readies Legislative Motion to Green Light CBO

¶5. (C) PM Erdogan will convene a cabinet meeting on October 15 during which a legislative motion approving in principle

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cross border operations against PKK terrorists in Iraq will be introduced and opened for signature. Once approved by the Council of Ministers, the measure will be sent to parliament as early as October 16 for debate and approval later in the week. The motion reportedly would provide the Prime Minister authority to give a green light to military action in Iraq and the authority would last for up to one year.

Press Reports of Cross Border Shelling

¶6. (C) Media reports noted that the Turkish General Staff (TGS) posted a statement to its website acknowledging for the first time that the Turkish military had shelled sites along the Turkey-Iraq border on October 12. The statement claims that PKK bases were the target of the shelling, which was carried out in retaliation for terrorist attacks inside Turkey. Despite the high level of rhetoric threatening a possible CBO, there were no reports of unusual military operations nor signs of an imminent CBO in the vicinity of the Habur Gate border crossing and Silopi October 15. Operations at Habur Gate are reportedly running normally, although the press presence there has increased. Commercial truck traffic on the Habur road was somewhat below normal levels, with approximately 1,000 trucks crossing the Turkish-Iraqi border in both directions in the 24-hour period ending October 15. Meanwhile, PKK leader Murat Karayilan on October 13 warned that any incursion by Turkish forces inside Iraq would be met with fierce resistance. He claimed the PKK would "make Turkey experience a Vietnam war."

¶7. (C) There were no public demonstrations in either Ankara or Istanbul over the weekend nor on October 15 protesting AGR. However, with the four-day holiday having just ended, and wet, rainy weather predominating in Ankara, this is not surprising. We anticipate the size and frequency of demonstrations to increase in coming days.

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